



Issue #2
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Song of Saya




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A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace, their bodies glowing with a warm, golden light. They are surrounded by a dense, vibrant garden of various flowers and foliage in shades of purple, pink, green, and yellow. The man has his eyes closed and a peaceful expression, while the woman leans into him, her face partially obscured. The overall atmosphere is one of romantic bliss and intimacy.


I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT LOVE WAS.
I WAS WRONG. WHAT I'M FEELING
NOW TRANSCENDS OUR DEFINITION
OF LOVE. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.
IT FELT LIKE I HAD KNOWN HER
AND LOVED HER FOR A LIFETIME.

THERE WERE SO MANY
QUESTIONS: WHO IS SHE?
WHERE DID SHE COME
FROM? HOW DID SHE FIND
ME? AND WHY?


BUT DID I REALLY WANT TO
KNOW THOSE ANSWERS?
NO. I CHOSE TO LIVE IN MY
BLISS INSTEAD.

A close-up of a woman's face with long, dark, wavy hair and striking blue eyes. She has a gentle, enigmatic smile. To her left, the profile of a man's face is visible, looking towards her. The background is a soft, painterly mix of colors.

SHE UNDERSTOOD ME
WITH JUST A LOOK.

A hand is shown holding a small, rectangular photograph. The photo depicts three people: a man with glasses on the left, a woman in the center, and another woman on the right. They are all smiling and appear to be from a past time. The hand holding the photo is weathered and aged.

SHE FELT MY
LONELINESS.



THE HOURS, MINUTES, DAYS, NIGHTS, PAST,
PRESENT, FUTURE-**EVERYTHING**... IT BLEED
INTO ONE MOMENT WHEN I WAS WITH HER.

BUT THEN I OPEN MY EYES AND
THE DREAM IS OVER. THIS IS MY
REALITY. I'M STILL NOT USED TO
IT. BUT AT LEAST I HAVE **HER**...

JOSH, WHERE
DID YOU GET
THIS?

I DUNNO.
EVERYTHING'S SUCH A
BLUR. I THINK... ROCHELLE
BRAUN, ONE OF THE
PATIENTS. I REMEMBER.
SHE TOLD ME EVERYTHING
I SEE IS REAL. IS IT,
SAYA?

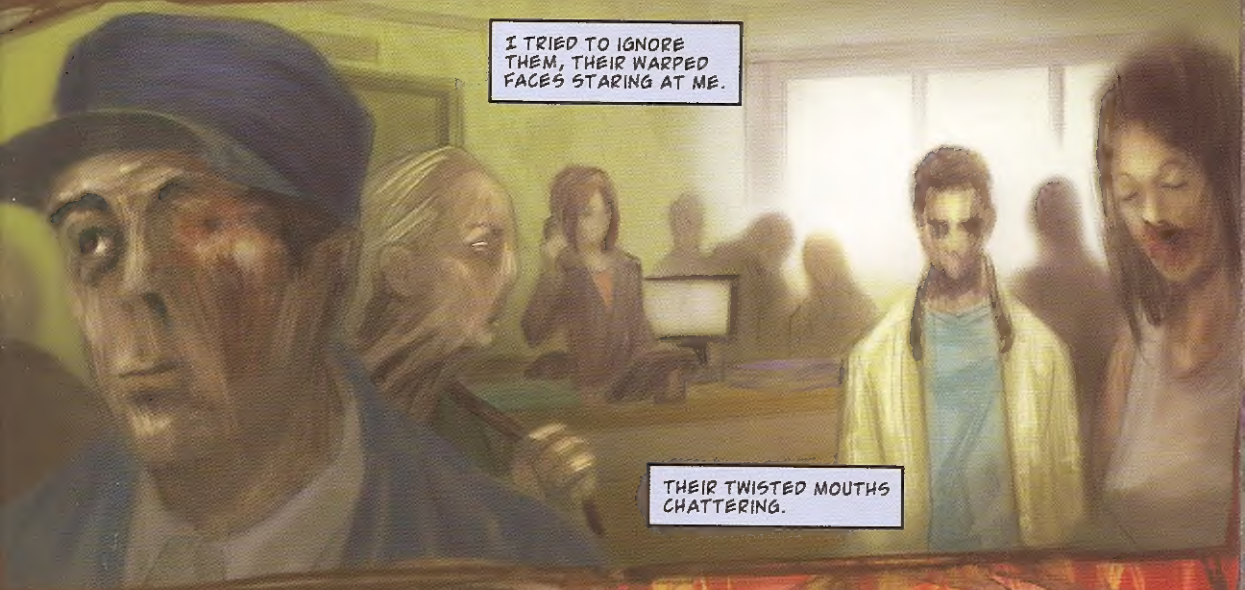
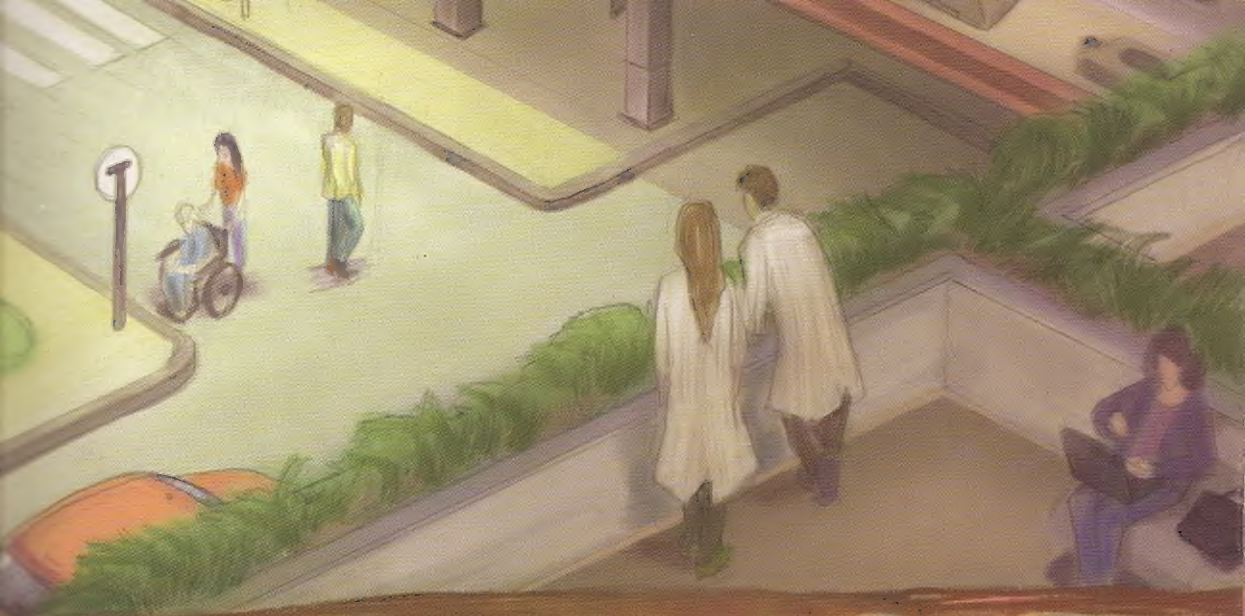
I COULD GO TO
THE HOSPITAL AND
TALK TO ROCHELLE,
BUT—I JUST DON'T KNOW
IF I CAN GO OUT THERE
AGAIN. EVERYTHING IS
SO... **FOREIGN** TO
ME NOW...

YES. I'M REAL.
THESE SYMBOLS ARE
REAL. MY FATHER WAS
WORKING ON SOMETHING
LIKE THIS BEFORE HE
DISAPPEARED. I THINK
THIS WILL LEAD US
TO HIM.

EVEN IF IT
MEANS FINDING
A CURE?

I CAN'T TRUST MY
OWN EYES ANYMORE.
PEOPLE AREN'T PEOPLE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M
LOOKING AT HALF THE TIME.
EXCEPT YOU... YOU'RE
THE ONLY ONE THAT
MAKES SENSE.

THEN TRUST ME.
WE HAVE TO FIND MY
FATHER BEFORE IT'S
TOO LATE.



I TRIED TO IGNORE
THEM, THEIR WARPED
FACES STARING AT ME.


THEIR TWISTED MOUTHS
CHATTERING.




THE WARMTH OF HER
TOUCH WAS FADING.

THE AIR WAS
GETTING THIN.


MARK? RIGHT,
MARCUS. WHERE
ARE YOU RIGHT
NOW?




WELCOME TO
THE DEN. FOUND
THIS PLACE A
WHILE BACK.



I BET AN I.T. GUY
FOUR GAMES. HE LOST,
OF COURSE. HAD HIM LOG
ME INTO THE HOSPITAL'S
FIBER BACKBONE.
WICKED FAST.




INSTA-PORN
NIRVANA, I
GET IT.



I NEED
EVERYTHING YOU
GOT ON ROCHELLE
BRAUN AND A
DR. OJAI.

OKAY, LADIES
FIRST. ROCHELLE
BRAUN. LET'S SEE
WHAT WE FIND
HERE...



"CONSULT WITH SHULTZ AND TANNER LAST APRIL.
SUBJECT IN THEIR STUDY IN TREATMENT OF SEVERE
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY THROUGH DEEP BRAIN
STIMULATION...SUCCESSFUL...BLAH BLAH."

BUZZZZZZ

SHE WAS
RELEASED LAST
WEEK. STRANGE
THOUGH... NO HOME
ADDRESS, NO
NEXT OF KIN.

SURRRP

NOW, THIS
DR. OJAI... SOUNDS
FAMILIAR. NEUROSURGEON
FELLOW AT THE HOSPITAL
STARTING IN 1968.
PIONEERING WORK.

SEMI-RETIRED
FOUR YEARS AGO.
FOUR CHANGES OF
ADDRESS...

HEY, JOSHUA,
BUDDY? YOU HAVING
ONE OF YOUR
MOMENTS?

EMAIL...
ME... WHAT
YOU...

THEIR GLOWING EYES. THEIR PUTRID SMELL.



D-DR.
SCHULTZ?



WH-WHERE
AM I, DR.
SCHULTZ?

WE'RE MOVING
ON TO THE NEXT
PHASE OF YOUR
TREATMENT,
ROCHELLE.



IS THIS HER,
TIANNA? IS THIS
THE PERSON YOU
GAVE IT TO?

YES... THAT'S
HER...



GOOD. THAT
WILL BE ALL.
TAKE HER TO
THE CORE...

THAT'S
HER... RIGHT...
THERE...



DOES THIS LOOK
FAMILIAR, ROCHELLE?
IT'S THE KEY TO
EVERYTHING. THE
ROSETTA STONE.


I-I-I'VE
DONE NOTHING
WRONG.

WHERE IS
THE MISSING
PIECE?




I... I...
DON'T HAVE IT
ANYMORE...

THEN TELL
ME WHO YOU
GAVE IT
TO.




I... HELP,
PLEASE...

JOSH?




ONE TOUCH, AND SHE TOOK
ALL THE HORRORS AWAY.

THANK YOU.



I TRY TO HOLD ON TO
REALITY, BUT IT JUST
SLIPS AWAY FROM ME. IF
IT WEREN'T FOR YOU,
I'D STILL BE...

BUT I'M
HERE FOR
YOU.



JOSH, JUST
REST.

I'LL FIND HIM
FOR YOU BEFORE
THIS OVERCOMES
ME... BEFORE I'M
NO USE TO YOU
ANYMORE.

ALL YOU ASKED ME
FOR WAS TO FIND YOUR
FATHER. BUT I COULDN'T
KEEP MYSELF TOGETHER
LONG ENOUGH. WHATEVER IS
HAPPENING TO ME... IT'S
GETTING WORSE.

From Subject
[x] Mark T. RE: Finding Clai.

GOD BLESS
YOU, MARCUS.

Help

GALVESTONE DAILY CHRONICLE

DESTITUTE PINE WILLOWS ESTATE
RESTORED TO FORMER GLORY

PHOTO BY JIM

THE CABIN. I'VE
BEEN THERE, JOSH, BUT
NO MATTER HOW I TRIED,
I COULDN'T FIND MY WAY
BACK. SOMETHING MUST
HAVE HAPPENED
TO IT...

I'LL GO
THERE RIGHT
NOW. I'LL
FIND HIM.

WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS FOR
ME?

WHY?

BECAUSE
YOU'RE ALL
THAT MATTERS
ANYMORE.



I DON'T ENJOY
BEING VIOLATED.
WHAT IS THIS?

NOTHING. WILL
ONLY TAKE US A
SECOND TO
FIGURE OUT WHO
IT WAS.

YES, I GOT IT
TOO. ALREADY
BEING LOOKED INTO,
NOT TO WORRY.


GREAT.
GO.

DR. CHARLES OJAI. THE MORE I
THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE MORE
THAT NAME SOUNDED FAMILIAR.

DID MY FATHER MENTION HIM BEFORE?
DID THEY WORK TOGETHER? I JUST
COULDN'T REMEMBER.

ANSWERS WERE IN THERE SOMEWHERE.
BUT IT LOOKED LIKE SOMEONE DIDN'T
WANT THEM TO BE FOUND.





I COULD STILL SMELL IT. THIS
WAS WHERE THE FIRE STARTED...

IT LOOKED LIKE THE RAMBLINGS OF
A MADMAN. HOLD ON A SECOND...

JACKPOT!

BUT IT WAS MUCH WORSE.

WHAT THE
SHIT?!

THE
JOURNAL OF
DR. CHARLES
OJAI...

It happened exactly three years
after I lost my little girl. My
life already left me so all I
did was work and my libations.
Sandra's ramblings were typical
of someone losing their grip on
reality. She had been quickly
driven insane since the surgery.

I don't know what drew me to
her. Maybe I was feeling particu-
larly lonely that day. I was
and her talk of other worlds
made me think that maybe there
was more to it than just this
world. It and she tried to convince
me it was all real.

She drew them for me. The
symbols. She said they were
the key that opened the door.
I studied them, noticed there
were similar archaic symbols
found in other ancient
cultures.

That's what she told me to do, put
in order every which way, but there
was nothing. When the anniversary of
her death came around, I was desper-
ately obsessed over it. I don't know
if something happened. Or maybe
I was just drunk.

She was only like that because she was
behind the scenes. A voice, genuinely
innocent yet distant and cold. This
creature Sandra had described
to me. For who she was, she


I stared at her for hours
and all she did was stare
back. She seemed to have
no concept of emotion.
sadness, happiness, anger,
hurt, nothing registered.
but somehow she saw
right through me. I could
see in her eyes that she
understood me.

She had a strange way of
stopping whenever she was
around. I was fascinated
she spoke English but our
conversations were limited.
she came from far away and
was drawn to the symbols.
at first I tried to treat her
like my daughter I wanted
to take care of her.

But she reacted to nothing, so
I began to treat her like a lab
experiment. I finally got a
reaction from her by accident.
It turns out she likes raw
meat. It was the first time
I saw her smile.

She disappeared and I came
when I reorganized the symbols.
her times it was like a layer of skin
been lifted from our reality, revealing the
pulsating, living, breathing underside. That
was what Sandra talked about. there was
some order to the madness but I couldn't
grasp it. I pressed Saya for answers,
she had none. The symbols were for
her.

everybody
The only two people
I thought I could trust were my
colleagues at the hospital, Dr. Po
Schultz and Dr. Erin Tanner.




I was able to set the right sequence of symbols but I quickly regretted letting them see Saya. They only saw her as a thing, a means to an end. She read them, just as I read me, and I could see in their eyes that I didn't trust them. I had to see in my research, which was twisted. I would never let them see me.

My fears were justified when I found out they interrogated Sandra and tried to get her to tell them everything she told me. They discovered that the only other way to see Saya and the other world was through physical brain manipulation. Her gruesome death was nothing more than collateral damage.


My only recourse was to tell Saya to leave our world. Eventually she would see the dark side of human nature. It was heartbreaking for me to do.

When I looked in her eyes, I couldn't help but think of Kelly. I told her to go away and never come back, and that was the last I ever saw of her...

IT FINALLY HIT ME. I'D BEEN LOST IN A DREAM THE WHOLE TIME. HELD UNDER HER SPELL. FOR GOD'S SAKE, I HAD NO IDEA WHAT SAYA WAS...




JOSHUA? WHY
THE HELL IS YOUR
FRONT DOOR
OPEN?




MY GOD, WHAT
THE HELL HAS
HAPPENED TO
YOU?

JOSHI I
NEED TO TALK
TO YOU, MAN.
COME ON.




SORRY MY
FRIEND, BUT
THIS CAN'T WAIT.
I GOTTA DO...
SOMETHING.

Josh,
I think I know
what's happening to
you. Shultz and
Tanner doing some
horrific, illegal shit.
I think you need more
proof.
Call me!



SECURE HIM IN
THE VAN. I'LL GO IN
AND CLEAN UP HIS
MESSY-MESS. BE
RIGHT BACK.



ALRIGHT,
DOGS—LET'S SEE IF
ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS
CAN BE MODULATED INTO
AUDIBLE, SUSTAINED
WHATEVERTHEFUCKS.

click

A SHITTY
LITTLE NOISE.
FANCY.

HORRIFIC,
ILLEGAL SHIT,
HUH? THAT'S THE
UNDERSTATEMENT
OF THE—

I'll be damned. It works. This is where it's been hiding...

BOOM!

AAAAAAHHH

AAARGH!

KLOMP
KLOMP

WHO'S THAT?

JOSHI


HUH?

IT'S ME,
CARLY!

MARK TOLD ME
WHAT HAPPENED AT THE
HOSPITAL. I WAS WORRIED
SO I FOLLOWED YOU HERE.
I'M SORRY, I SHOULDN'T
HAVE DONE THAT.

NO, YOU
SHOULDN'T HAVE.
YOU BETTER
LEAVE.


CARLY? WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
HERE?




EVERYONE'S
WORRIED, JOSH. YOU
DON'T PICK UP THE PHONE,
YOU DON'T RETURN CALLS, I
GO BY YOUR HOUSE BUT YOU
NEVER ANSWER. IT'S LIKE
YOU'RE SHUTTING OFF
THE WORLD.

MAYBE I
JUST WANT
TO BE LEFT
ALONE.


HAVE
YOU LOOKED AT
YOURSELF? WHAT'S
HAPPENING TO YOU?
THE DOCTORS CAN
HELP!




I GOT ALL THE
HELP I NEED. I DON'T
NEED THE DOCTORS
AND I SURE AS HELL
DON'T NEED YOU.




YOU CARE ABOUT
ME? IS THAT WHAT YOU
TOLD RAY WHEN I WAS
IN A COMA?



WHAT IS FAIR?
EMBARRASSING
ME IN FRONT OF
MY FAMILY?



JOSH, PLEASE!
WHY ARE YOU DOING
THIS? I CARE
ABOUT YOU!



THAT'S NOT
FAIR!

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU
LIKE THIS. I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT
THIS ISN'T YOU.

YOU DON'T KNOW SHIT.
WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK
TO YOUR MOM AND YOUR
LITTLE TRACT HOUSING IN
COLORADO WHERE YOU'LL
BE NOTHING?!

FUCK YOU...

EVERYTHING WAS
SLIPPING AWAY..

I WAS STUPID TO
THINK YOU EVER LOVED
ME. YOU HAVE NO CLUE
WHAT LOVE IS. GET
OUT OF HERE!

SHIT...
CARLY, WAIT!



ARE YOU
OKAY?

I... WHO
THE HELL IS
THAT?

HE HAD SOME
SORT OF DEVICE.
IT'S SOUND HURT ME.
BADLY. I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I DID.

HE'S
BREATHING.
HE'S ALIVE.

MARK WAS
HERE LOOKING FOR
YOU. I THINK THERE
WAS ANOTHER
MAN... HE TOOK
MARK.

UURRGHH.

WHY DOES HE
LOOK COMPLETELY
NORMAL TO ME?
HOW'S THAT
POSSIBLE?

Josh,
I think I know
what's happen-
ing. Shutz
inner do
trific, ill
think have
need more.
call me!

THAT'S MARK'S
WRITING.

MMNN...
MMNN... MMNN

YOU'RE...

...A GODDAMN
MONSTER!

JOSH!

ONE TOUCH...

...AND I SAW HIM FOR
WHAT HE REALLY WAS.


GET...

...OFF OF
ME!

FLIP

WHACK

CRACK




I KILLED
HIM. I... I
KILLED...

YOU
SAVED
US.


WE CAN'T
JUST LEAVE
HIM HERE.

I WAS DIGGING A MAKESHIFT
GRAVE FOR SOMETHING I'D
KILLED IN COLD BLOOD.

HUMAN OR MONSTER—
WAS THERE STILL A
DIFFERENCE?




OJAI IS *NOT*
YOUR FATHER. I
FOUND HIS NOTES,
SO NO MORE LIES.
TELL ME WHO
YOU ARE.



TELL ME!
PLEASE, I'M NOT
MYSELF ANYMORE!
I KILLED THAT
MAN.

I'VE
BECOME
EVIL.

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT EVIL MEANS,
JOSH. BUT I CAN TELL
YOU'RE HURTING. I
WANT YOU TO
UNDERSTAND...

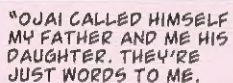


"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.
I'VE WANDERED THOUSANDS
OF DISPARATE WORLDS.

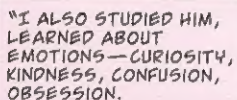
"I'D ACCEPTED THIS TO BE
MY EXISTENCE. KEPT AWAY
FROM SENTIENT LIFE FORMS,
NEVER SEEKING COMPANY.

"I KNEW NO PURPOSE...
UNTIL OJAI'S GATEWAY.

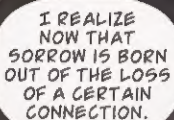
"I FELT SOMETHING—A
PULL I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.
SOMETHING I RECOGNIZED."



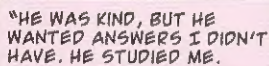
"OJAI CALLED HIMSELF
MY FATHER AND ME HIS
DAUGHTER. THEY'RE
JUST WORDS TO ME.



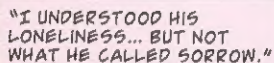
"I ALSO STUDIED HIM,
LEARNED ABOUT
EMOTIONS—CURIOSITY,
KINDNESS, CONFUSION,
OBSESSION.



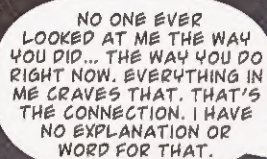
I REALIZE
NOW THAT
SORROW IS BORN
OUT OF THE LOSS
OF A CERTAIN
CONNECTION.



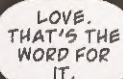
"HE WAS KIND, BUT HE
WANTED ANSWERS I DIDN'T
HAVE. HE STUDIED ME.



"I UNDERSTOOD HIS
LONELINESS... BUT NOT
WHAT HE CALLED SORROW."



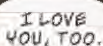
NO ONE EVER
LOOKED AT ME THE WAY
YOU DID... THE WAY YOU DO
RIGHT NOW. EVERYTHING IN
ME CRAVES THAT. THAT'S
THE CONNECTION. I HAVE
NO EXPLANATION OR
WORD FOR THAT.




LOVE.
THAT'S THE
WORD FOR
IT.



I LOVE
YOU.




I LOVE
YOU, TOO.




WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LET ME GO!

CALM DOWN, MARK. IT WAS AN UNEXPECTED BUT PLEASANT SURPRISE WHEN YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR OUR EXPERIMENT. YOU'VE ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED AN EAGERNESS TO LEARN.




WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HER SO FAR IS THAT SHE'S A BEING OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN EXISTING IN A DIMENSION JUST OUTSIDE OF OUR OWN. PATIENTS REFER TO HER AS **SAYA**.

ALL HUMANS HAVE THE ABILITY TO SEE OTHER DIMENSIONS, BUT IT REQUIRES **CERTAIN BRAIN CONDITIONS** THAT CAN ONLY BE REPLICATED THROUGH **TRAUMA**. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE **SUPERSTRING THEORY**?




WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

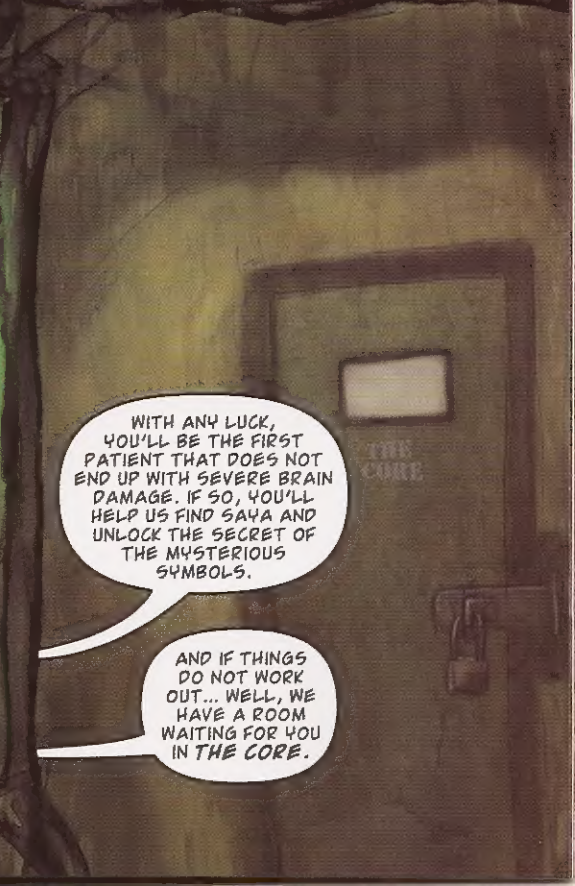
I KNOW THIS IS HARD TO ACCEPT. IT CONTRADICTS EVERYTHING YOU LEARNED IN SCHOOL.



IMAGINE THAT YOU'RE AN FM RADIO. YOUR BRAIN MUST BE **TUNED IN** TO A SPECIFIC FREQUENCY IN ORDER TO PICK UP A SPECIFIC SIGNAL. THERE ARE SIGNALS ALL AROUND US. IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY.




FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, WE DEVELOPED A MICROCHIP THAT WILL ALLOW US TO PROGRAM SOMEONE AND **CHANGE THE CHANNELS** AT OUR DISCRETION.



WITH ANY LUCK, YOU'LL BE THE FIRST PATIENT THAT DOES NOT END UP WITH SEVERE BRAIN DAMAGE. IF SO, YOU'LL HELP US FIND **SAYA** AND UNLOCK THE SECRET OF THE MYSTERIOUS SYMBOLS.

AND IF THINGS DO NOT WORK OUT... WELL, WE HAVE A ROOM WAITING FOR YOU IN **THE CORE**.

A dark, atmospheric illustration of a group of people in a tunnel. The scene is dimly lit, with light filtering through openings in the distance. The walls of the tunnel are covered in hieroglyphs. In the foreground, several figures are visible, some looking towards the light at the end of the tunnel. A speech bubble is present in the center of the image.

SAYASAYASAYASAY
ASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
AYASAYASAYASAYASAYAS
SAYASAYASAYA...

TO BE CONTINUED...